

# New York THEATRE CRITICS'

Reviews

1943

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\*Asterisks indicate shows scheduled to play week of March 29, 1943.

†"Apology" opened Monday, March 22nd, at the Mansfield Theatre.

†"Richard III" opened Friday, March 26th, at the Forrest Theatre.

### THEATRE CRITICS' REVIEWS IS A COMPLETE GUIDE AND RECORD TO THE NEW YORK SHOWS

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# "Richard III"

NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN  
March 27, 1943

## George Coulouris Plays the Leading Role and Stages Production

By JOHN ANDERSON

SINCE it is the only Shakespeare production of the season we may be grateful for the honorable effort and high intentions which have gone into "Richard III" as acted at the Forrest Theatre last night by George Coulouris. It is something at least, in a theatre out at its spiritual elbows, to have the Bard remembered at all.

There is, of course, a special point to "Richard" in any time of tyrants. Its pitch-black portrait of malignant and murderous ambition is a picture that needs no special touching-up for present parallel; its bloody background of intrigue, deceit, and hypocrisy, is as familiar as the smiling diplomatic lie and the diseased mind.

The fascination of the play is sheer evil and lies in the brilliance of its central character, his intellectual arrogance, moral depravity, and sardonic humor. Richard could keep his promises until he had to cut his way out of them with a dagger. With savage mockery he could use his victims as long as they were useful, make them believe his flatteries and cajoleries, his false pieties and empty pledges, and then hack them down.

This lunging career of slaughter always has made many of the other characters seem more clay pigeons in a shooting gallery where they play for keeps, than like living persons. When Richard is not present his fatal shadow lies across the scenes, so that the tragedy becomes, more than any of the others, a star part.

Its difficulties are increased by the fact that the character develops hardly at all throughout the action, from the first moments of exultant and self-proclaimed evil to the very end, save for the tardy but useless emergence of a conscience. The performance must be vigorous, crafty, treacherous, fascinating, and full of a sort of sardonic relish in Richard's warped but brilliant mind. And it must be sustained at a high pitch.

Mr. Coulouris, who gave his only previous Shakespearean performance as an excellent Marc Antony in the Mercury's "Julius Caesar" and who has played many villains on the stage, doesn't measure up to the part. Richard's repulsive appearance is emphasized in the text so heavily that an actor may be justified in going any length (regardless of historical dispute) but plainly the effect must be offset somehow by personal magnetism unless all the other characters are to seem mere fools, and easy dupes.

Mr. Coulouris made Richard thickly hunchback, rather bumpy in fact, and clumsy. His "bustle" is a heavy scamper. There is almost no malevolent fascination, no gleaming ferocity of humor that laughs at itself as well as at its victims. Very seldom is there any suggestion of the devil's fastidious delight in his own devilry.

When this Richard wooed Queen Anne, being the coffin of his father, he had hunchback, he lacks the eloquence of brazen cajolery, the high mockery of an actor watching himself, with professional pride but some contempt, bending the will of his audience.

When he pretends to reject the throne, this Richard is broadly burlesqued—not delicately play-acting in the midst of a sinister and cynical plot. He emerges largely as a butcher (to use an obsolete word), so we miss the sneering malignancy and near-gaiety of a courtly monster, whose mind was more twisted than his back. John Barrymore's Richard remains the best I have ever seen.

### Sensible Changes

For my own part I like the play better as Shakespeare wrote it with the blunt opening soliloquy, but there is ample precedent for the present arrangement, which begins with the last part of "Henry VI" and the first stabbing.

Some of the other changes are sensible—notably the omission of the ghost scenes, though I think the loss of the superb scene with Queen Elizabeth in the last act is serious, as is also the omission for its wonderful and pitiable contrast of the optimistic glimpses of the little doomed princes before they leave for the Tower and their death.

Butley's unit setting, with three levels, and high arches, is handsome in some of its stage pictures, but not always accessible, and becomes a serious impediment in the battle scenes, where Richard seems to be living, not in a tent, so much as a curtained cellar. Jean Rosenthal's lighting was often enormously helpful.

Some of the other performances are notably good, especially Philip Bourneuf's Buckingham, Anthony Kemble-Cooper's Hastings, and John Ireland's Richmond, all clear, well spoken and thought out. Mildred Dunnock had some impressive moments as the vengeful Queen Margaret, though she, too, suffered from the general defect of the others—the lack of clear diction and volume which, in the smaller scenes, made some of the passages unintelligible.

N. Y. NEWSPAPER PM  
March 28, 1943

## The Hunchback Who Ruled England

By LOUIS KRONENBERGER

RICHARD III is not very imposing Shakespeare: it lacks depth and poetic richness; it is much longer than it need be; it dies away in noisy cockalorum scenes of battle; and it abounds in that facile rhetoric that the earlier Shakespeare could write with his left hand. But, it has always had a value in the theatre for Richard—who completely dominates the action—is brilliantly portrayed, and in the right actor's hands he can have a special and vivid fascination. Indeed, for a successful produc-

tion, he must have; for the rest of "Richard III" consists largely of bloodshed, the cries and curses of unhappy women, and the third-rate vaudeville of men being led to the block.

It is not surprising that Mr. Coulouris should have wanted to play Richard; it is only disappointing that so skillful and intelligent an actor should have failed to do the part justice. Mr. Coulouris' portrayal of the ruthless, crown-coveting hunchback doubtless has its points. It has nothing wooden about it; it is often dynamic and sometimes individual. But it misses the real intellectual forces in Richard, and the sardonic contemplation of his own villainies. It seems to miss, too, the joy Richard took in disembodying Shakespeare's Richard, as he goes about disposing of everybody who stands between himself and the throne, has his outbursts of impatience, his moments of rage; but being a man of no piety and much guile, who has found that the best way to deal with his villainy is to exalt in it, he is generally smooth and artful in his methods. Mr. Coulouris' Richard is almost always impatient, with a rapid and jerky manner of speech, a sinister look and a feverish air. His fine first

speech—which should express an artist's delight in self-portraiture—becomes a rush of words, as though in his hurry to get going he has no time for it. He gets little wit or address into the scene with Anne; and he plays the scene where he pretends to refuse the crown as the broadest farce, trying to gratify the audience instead of gull the Lord Mayor and the citizens. His Richard has villainy without fascination, and intricacy without inwardness. It is a neurotic man, instead of a man who has found violent outlets for his neurosis.

For the rest, the play is merely dull. It has been liberally cut, and been staged with a queer-looking set that at least obviates the delays of scene-shifting. A few scenes have a degree of animation, though the thing mostly plods along—passably acted, passably spoken—always "Shakespeare," never a play that leaps out at you for the first time. Despite some touches of levity, Philip Bourneuf brings a welcome grace and liveliness to the role of Buckingham, and some of the others have their moments. Mr. Coulouris deserves our thanks for giving us the season's only production of Shakespeare. But it should have been a more exciting one.

NEW YORK SUN  
March 27, 1943

## 'Richard III,' First Shakespeare of the Season, Opens in the Forrest

By WARD MOREHOUSE

GREAT names in the theatre have been linked with the crooked-backed and hellish Duke of Gloster—Booth and Barrett; Mansfield and Mantell, and Barrymore. And now into the role of the terrifying Richard comes George Coulouris, giving Broadway its first Shakespearean offering of the current season.

As revealed last evening in the first performance at the Forrest, this new "Richard III" lacks stature as a production; it is rou-

tine and undistinguished. Mr. Coulouris's performance as Richard is by no means an inspired one. I was moved by it only occasionally.

Let it be hastily said, however, that any actor now playing the role of the deformed monster in this bloodiest of tragedies is immediately handicapped by the fact that he is appearing before many playgoers who beheld John Barrymore's performance, and revere its memory. Courage is needed to tackle such a role, and Mr. Coulouris is certainly to be commended for his courage, if not his wisdom, in this new venture.

In his playing of Richard Mr. Coulouris seemed to me rather a transparent villain. He is sardonic, leering and sly in portions of the play; toward the end he is a haunted and demoniacal figure, agonized and full of terror. An interesting portrayal at moments, but never a soaring or electric one. Intelligent actor that he is, I did not feel Mr. Coulouris was up to the role of Richard, and I can't think offhand of the man who might be.

Moments of this new "Richard III" that were most effective to me were those showing the murder of the Duke of Clarence in the Tower; Richard's wooing of Lady Anne; the scene in which the stage was held by

the young princes who are doomed for slaughter, and moments toward the end on the field of Bosworth.

So the Forrest, the home of "Tobacco Road" and the Jeeter Lester clan for all those years, is now given over to trumpets and alarms, to armor and truncheons, to gentlemen in ruffs, knee-breeches, head-dresses—belts, buckles and swords. And there are more stabbings in 49th street than the New York stage has had in many a day. Several of the co-players of Mr. Coulouris contribute vital performances to this bloody business at the Forrest.

Philip Bourneuf, indeed an able actor, is the Duke of Buckingham. Harold Young brings spirit and excellent reading to the role of the Duke of Clarence. John Ireland has great force as the victorious and avenging Duke of Richmond. There is help, too, from Larry Robinson, Michael Artist and Helen Warren, particularly in the wooing scene.

Well, it's been a theatrical season of variety, anyway. A season of Joseph Fields and Thornton Wilder; of the two Mikes, Myerberg and Todd. And now along comes Mr. Coulouris with Shakespeare, which he acts and also directs. A courageous undertaking, but I wish it were one of greater distinction.

# "Richard III"

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS  
March 27, 1943

## 'Richard III' Revival at the Forrest Is Played With Force

"Richard III," tragedy by William Shakespeare. Revived by Theatre Productions at the Forrest Theatre, New York, March 26, 1943.

★ ★ ★

By BURNS MANTLE

IT seems to me that George Coulouris' courage is to be commended for his revival of "Richard III" at the Forrest last night, even though his judgment may be questioned.

Under the most favorable conditions this particular tragedy has always been a thankless task, demanding all an actor had to give in personal popularity as well as skill.

It is of itself a depressing item in the Shakespearean repertory. True, it used to sell better than "Hamlet" in the book stalls, but it never has paid similar dividends in production, unless, as said, the popularity of its chief interpreter has carried it.

Our most notable experience in that respect was the revival Arthur Hopkins staged for John Barrymore in 1920. It was John's first Shakespearean experience and followed close upon his success with brother Lionel in "The Jest."

### Remembering Barrymore

John played fast and loose with the Richard traditions, making the venomous one a crafty, sardonic figure; reveling with more than a touch of humor in a sly Freudian analytical reading that greatly pleased his audiences and enthused his friends.

John's wooing of Anne was almost boyish, and not without a definite romantic charm, for all it interrupted the lady as she walked

behind the corpse of her murdered lord.

New with Coulouris we come back to the more legitimate, but also more depressing Shakespearean reading, and the contrast is not easy to adjust. Coulouris is a good actor, and one widely experienced, but such a following as he has built has been by playing the heavier, more sinister type of roles, and playing them expertly. His vast outstanding success, you may remember, was earned as the plotting fascist of "Watch on the Rhine."

### A Sinister Richard

Certainly Richard is sufficiently sinister to attract the attention of a specialist in the brutalities and butcheries of the most tragic drama, but if there is nothing more than the performance of such an expert to carry interest there is little emotional lift to the performance.

Coulouris' reading is generally excellent though hurried. The picture he creates of the deformed one is plainly ugly, with the twisted back, the shriveled arm emphasized and a knitted brow covering the aspect of something of a clownish aspect to some of the earlier scenes. His most successful scene last night was that of his masquerade to fool the Lord Mayor as to the sincerity of his hypocritical apologetics.

A weakness of the tragedy, too, has always been its tendency to spread out as it approaches the concluding scenes and lose hold of audience interest. In the text there is the scene of the ghosts of Richard's victims to give emphasis to the closing battle, but it usually is cut to save time.

### In Support

This leaves nothing but the alarms and puny blusters of stage warfare to bring the curtain down, so that the best of performances end in something of a rout. This was particularly true of the Coulouris version, it seemed to me last night.

The support is of an even competence. Our actors have too little practice with verse plays to read them impressively. The women were the best cast—Mildred Dunnoek's Margaret, Helen Warren's Anne, Norma Chambers' Elizabeth being forcefully spoken.

The men were uncomfortable but willing, headed by Philip Bourneuf's Buckingham, Harold Young's Clarence and John Ireland's

### 'RICHARD III'

"Richard III," Shakespearean tragedy, staged by George Coulouris; production and lighting by Jean Rosenthal; scenery by Motley; presented at the Forrest Theater Friday, March 26, 1943, by Theater Productions. The cast:

|                             |                       |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Queen Margaret              | Mildred Dunnoek       |
| King Henry VI               | Harry Irvine          |
| Richard, Duke of Gloucester | George Coulouris      |
| King Edward IV              | Tom Rutherford        |
| Queen Elizabeth             | Norma Chambers        |
| Edward, Prince of Wales     | Larry Robinson        |
| George, Duke of Clarence    | Harold Young          |
| Sir Richard Ratcliff        | John Parriah          |
| Lord Hastings               | Anthony Kemble Cooper |
| Lady Anne                   | Helen Warren          |
| Earl Rivers                 | Norman Rose           |
| Duke of Buckingham          | Philip Bourneuf       |
| Lord Stanley                | Stuart Casey          |
| Marquis of Dorset           | Eugene Stuckmann      |
| Sir Wm. Catesby             | Ralph Clanton         |
| 1st Murderer                | John Ireland          |
| 2nd Murderer                | Herbert Ratner        |
| 1st Citizen                 | Randolph Echols       |
| 2nd Citizen                 | Harold Young          |
| 3rd Citizen                 | Bertram Tanawell      |
| 4th Citizen                 | John Sylvester        |
| Lord Mayor of London        | Harry Irvine          |
| Richard, Duke of York       | Michael Artist        |
| Messenger                   | Norman Rose           |
| Scriverner                  | Bertram Tanawell      |
| Page                        | John Sylvester        |
| Sir James Tyrrel            | Herbert Ratner        |
| 2nd Messenger               | Eugene Stuckmann      |
| 3rd Messenger               | James Gannon          |
| Sir James Blunt             | John Ford             |
| Duke of Richmond            | John Ireland          |
| Duke of Norfolk             | Randolph Echols       |

### Richmond.

The setting is a series of steps and platforms, and serves its purpose reasonably well in the changes, with lighting helps from Tower to Castle and back to Tower again. Jean Rosenthal is responsible, with Motley, and they both may take a bow.

There was a generous audience, including many students, and the applause was encouraging.

NEW YORK POST  
March 27, 1943

## George Coulouris' 'Richard III' Seen at the Forrest Theatre

By WILLELA WALDORF

BROADWAY's only Shakespearean production of the season, a revival of "Richard III," opened at the Forrest Theatre last night with George Coulouris as the deformed monarch. Although it used to be a great favorite among the patrons of sundry actor-managers, the play has had little attention hereabout since John Barrymore gave his electrifying performance at the Plymouth Theatre back in 1920.

Compared to the great tragedies, "Richard III" is only second-rate Shakespeare, and some of it is probably not Shakespeare at all, but it offers a fair part for a leading "character" actor, and the success or failure of any particular production is apt to hinge on the ability of the player in the title role to dominate the stage and galvanize the audience into a state of fascinated excitement at his consummate villainy. Richard is a personification of the spirit of evil and if that actor who plays him merely gives a good stock performance, the play becomes nothing more than a rather exhausting blood-and-thunder melodrama, some of it so overdrawn as to sound rather silly in the theatre today.

### Better to See Than to Hear

Mr. Coulouris is an actor who has given many excellent performances on Broadway,

and he has had plenty of experience in Shakespeare both here and in England. Surprisingly, his Richard III, like the production he directed, is far more impressive visually than it is to listen in.

The Motleys have designed a production that becomes, to be sure, a trifle monotonous before the evening is over, using as it does an upper-level and a lower-level stage giving much opportunity for scurrying up and down stairs on the part of the actors. But it has the advantage of permitting continuous action without lowering the curtain except for one intermission, thus eliminating the frequent scene-shifting that so persistently interrupts most Shakespearean plays.

Using spot-lights effectively to pick out the action of the moment, they manage to suggest the shadowy, sinister, medieval background of Richard's murderous career and at the same time stream-line the action so thoroughly that, with the aid of a number of cuts in the text, the final curtain rings down shortly after eleven.

### Stream-Lined Villainy

The production at the Forrest is usually interesting to watch, gracefully costumed and sometimes attractively played, but it is a disappointment as spoken drama. Mr. Coulouris himself, however, is one of the prime offenders in this respect. The play begins with a brief excursion into the third part of "Henry VI," showing the murder of Henry, and then our rushes Richard on the upper-level of the Tower of London-like setting to speak Richard's opening soliloquy beginning:

"Now is the winter of our Discontent"

Made glorious summer by this sun of York

Mr. Coulouris sprinted through this passage so rapidly last night that it was well-nigh impossible to hear his words, far less attempt to digest them. His performance in the entire first half of the play was head-long and often inaudible, and while his performance-making Richard a medieval court-jester of a villain

—was almost always visually effective, his reading of the role was difficult to follow.

After the intermission, this defect was not so marked, and when Richard finally ascended the throne, there was a well-spoken scene with Buckingham to redeem the earlier inefficiency, but Buckingham himself, played by Philip Bourneuf with a deliberate and sardonic humor, dominated the stage whenever he had anything to say.

### Full Speed Through The Wars of the Roses

Generally speaking, it seemed as if Mr. Coulouris's stage direction and his performance were of a piece—suffering alike from a dread of waxing unduly pelantic and elocutionary. Nothing, to be sure, is more tiresome than the static, lecture-platform style of many Shakespearean revivals but there were times last night when we would have preferred less leaping up and down stairs and more emphasis on the Shakespearean lines as poetry.

There were sporadic moments in which some of the actors managed to let themselves speak well. Mildred Dunnoek as Margaret of Anjou was excellent when she spoke quietly, but when she became a dramatic fury, she forced her tones and sounded like a phonograph record played with a rusty needle. Helen Warren had a good scene as Lady Anne and Norma Chambers a moment or two as Queen Elizabeth, with good readings now and then by Harold Young, Tom Rutherford, Anthony Kemble Cooper, Ralph Clanton, John Ireland and others, but it was Mr. Bourneuf as Buckingham who gave the most consistently effective performance.

The management has kindly included in the program a chart illustrating the succession of kings during England's Wars of the Roses, and in some respects the new "Richard III" is an admirable production of a difficult drama. But we were often under the impression that Mr. Coulouris and several of his supporting players had a train to catch.

# "Richard III"

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM  
March 27, 1943

## Coulouris Fashions Thrilling Richard III

By BURTON RASCOE

A FORMER BUSBOY on an ocean liner, George Coulouris, last night gave an awe-struck audience at the Forrest such an exciting production of Richard III as probably has not been since Richard Burbage created the role (probably at the Globe) which, it is conjectured, Shakespeare wrote for him. It was a production such as devotees of The Bard will be telling their grandchildren about. It hangs up a record for strength, beauty and imagination of treatment which is not likely to be bettered in our time.

It is not merely that Mr. Coulouris has endowed one of the most mechanical of all Shakespeare's great tragic creations with the very blood and sinew of life (an extremely difficult thing to do, inasmuch as the part, as written, is that of abstract evil rather than that of a human being) but that, in staging the play, he has shown genius fused with intelligence and seen through, and into, every factor of the play, from beginning to end. He has surrounded himself with a superb cast and has given each man, woman and child in it such leeway in fulfilling his or her function as it is so extremely rare as to be

almost incredible in a director who also has the principal role.

### Departs from Tradition

Richard III is a star's part, and it is almost an unbroken tradition, even in the best productions, to play it as a one-man play, with the interest centering upon and practically ending with the starring role. Mr. Coulouris has had the grace and the sense to depart from this tradition. Not only does he not star himself in this production but also he so subdues the fastidious of many of Richard's speeches as to give the character a naturalness and credibility that is inconceivable from a bare reading of the text. By, in a way, underplaying the part he not only brings out unsuspected values in it, but lets the other parts take on unsuspected values also. Even the Margaret in this production becomes less an "incarnate curse" than a woman tragically put upon and embittered to the point of fury.

Throughout the first three scenes, act one, and particularly in the first soliloquy, I thought Mr. Coulouris spoke both too low and too fast. But that was because I did not see what he was doing. I was wrongly conditioned by previous performances to expect declamations from the actor playing Richard rather than the naturally quiet words of a man meditating out loud and the natural tone of a man in conversation with someone else. Mr. Coulouris was establishing Richard as a cruel, crafty, murderous, arrogant hypocrite and tyrant on his way to the throne through blood, not as a mere poetic concept of evil. As his intention became clearer, it also became clearer why Lady Anne, Lord Rivers, Lord Gray, Clarence and, even, Catesby had taken on such lineaments and importance as I had observed in no other performance.

### Scenery Effective

The scenery by Motley and the lighting by Jean Rosenthal also contribute vastly to make this production memorable. Only one set an extremely effective and artistic one—has been found to be necessary just as, in all probability only one set was (necessarily) used in Shakespeare's time. The Motley set, indeed, seems to have been carefully designed to conform with the limitations of the Globe and Blackfriars theaters, which had a balcony, stairways leading to the balcony on each side of the stage, and a door under the stage, thus providing three entrances below and three above. Thus in the Motley design the background is alternately the palace, the Tower (with the dungeon below) and the throne room, and the foreground is alternately a street and Salisbury plain. Ingenious lighting effects sustain the illusion.

The text Mr. Coulouris used is not only a well cut version of the First Folio text, but also one in which he has re-arranged and telescoped scenes in such a way as to make the movement toward climax continuous and not so jerky as written. His interpretation has made Elizabeth (played by Norma Chambers) and Lady Anne (played by Helen Warren) equal in importance to Margaret (played by Mildred Dunnoek) as the Cassandras whose curses spell the doom of the "lump of foul deformity," and all three are superb. Philip Bourneuf was brilliant as Buckingham. Others whose work I found especially thrilling were Anthony Kemble Cooper, Ralph Clanton and the two youngsters, Michael Artist and Larry Robinson. But each unit in the cast has been so carefully chosen and coached toward the greater unity of the play that it is almost a betrayal of Mr. Coulouris' aim and effect to award special mention to individual players.

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE  
March 27, 1943

## Killer Crookback

By HOWARD BARNES

RICHARD CROOKBACK has always had a fascination for actors. George Coulouris is the latest to fall under the spell. His "Richard III," presented at the Forrest Theater with fancy costumes and one spare setting, is ample proof of the drama's magnetism for a player. He dominates nearly every episode of a many-scened production. He hobbles around as menacingly as Charles Laughton in "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," killing off a score or so of persons who stand between him and the throne of England. Unfortunately his perform-

ance is more melodramatic than eloquent, while the production which frames it is only so-so.

Shakespeare must certainly have written this bloody tragedy as a vehicle. While it is full of magnificent speeches and has two or three scenes of splendid satire, it is concerned for the most part with the murderous treachery of one misshapen monster. The action is violent and explicit, offering a wide range of acting pyrotechnics. Coulouris has made the most of these, conspiring and killing with almost an evil delight. What he has failed to do is to illuminate the character as Shakespeare has so surely done in the writing.

Not that "Richard III" is one of the Bard's more penetrating plays. Once the fact has been established that Richard was inspired to his murderous quest of a crown by his physical deformity the drama resolves itself into a series of conspiracies and killings. In the course of these, though, there is more than one passage to make one's blood run

cold. My temperature stayed extremely normal last evening. Both in his staging and his acting, Coulouris is constantly becoming enmeshed in the complicated plot. While trying to make his offering simple and Elizabethan, he has merely succeeded in making it a bit turgid.

The best scenes by far are those between Richard and Buckingham, the traitor whom he in turn betrays. Philip Bourneuf plays the latter role with authority and fire, matching the most impressive acting of Coulouris. The scene in which Buckingham persuades the hypocritical Richard to accept the throne, as the latter hides behind a prayer book, is so moving to see and so is that in which the king doublescrosses his most faithful gangster, Mildred Dunnoek, as Queen Margaret; Norma Chambers, as Elizabeth; Tom Rutherford, Anthony Kemble Cooper, Harold Young, Stuart Casey and the others in the cast give faithful but rather pedestrian readings of their various roles. "Richard III" is a striking murder melodrama, but it might have been more effectively presented.

NEW YORK TIMES  
March 27, 1943

## George Coulouris as the Evil Gloucester in a Revival of Shakespeare's "Richard III"—Play Now Is in Two Acts

By LEWIS NICHOLS

TO a season thus far bereft of all Shakespeare, George Coulouris last evening brought a revival of "Richard III." It has been a decade since the story of the murderous Gloucester last was told on the Broadway stage, two decades since

the magnificent voice of John Barrymore told it, so perhaps Mr. Coulouris is right in thinking the time has come again. Quite possibly it also is impertinence to suggest that the current revival cannot be one of the best, and that last night's visitors to the Forrest sat through a play which appeared long and tedious and mainly unrelieved by the stirrings of life. The season's only bit of Shakespeare seems to deserve a bit more.

Mr. Coulouris is a good actor, in whose record is a long list of saints and sinners, and presumably he should be able to do well by the evil Richard who lived by the dagger and thereby perished. But in his own revival he does not make Gloucester a full figure, and he can send across the footlights little of the fear and horror which are essential reactions to the role when perfectly stressed. Further, and it is most unlike Mr. Coulouris, he often speaks indistinctly; last night, at least, wasting a good share of the Winter of discontent speech early in the play.

As the director, Mr. Coulouris has turned the play into two acts, staging it on two

levels of a setting that should be of greater practical excellence than it is. The use of both levels gives the director the chance for a smooth flow of action without the usual waits, but in this instance it has rather tended to beguile the actors into unnecessary stampings up and down the stairs. In several instances players cross the stage the hard way—from lower level to upper, across and then down—a fair enough pretense for action, of course, so long as the audience doesn't recognize it for what it is.

Associated with Mr. Coulouris is a cast of undeniably genuine earnestness, some members of whom take their lines quietly, some noisily, some as though they were delivering them at school. Philip Bourneuf is the Duke of Buckingham, quiet and human; Mildred Dunnoek is Queen Margaret and Norma Chambers, Elizabeth. Other members of the company are Anthony Kemble Cooper, Helen Warren, Herbert Rainer, John Ireland, Randolph Nichols. The firm of Motley designed the setting and Jean Rosenthal controlled the lighting to go with it.

# "Apology"

NEW YORK POST  
March 23, 1943

## Lee Strasberg Presents 'Apology' at the Mansfield Theatre

By WILLELLA WALDORF

**D**RAMATURGY in its most solemn and exhausting form is in evidence at the Mansfield Theatre where, Lee Strasberg is presenting "Apology," a new play by Charles Schnee.

Studiously artificial, awed by its own cosmic discursiveness, it is an ostentatious and hollow bore from beginning to end. In form it is apparently supposed to be strikingly original. Samuel Leve has arranged some impressionistic effects with lights, movement, panels and stereopticon slides behind a gauze curtain that might have proved effective had the play managed to hold the audience's attention, but Mr. Schnee's story is so persistently dull and his way of telling it so elaborately verbose that it failed to stir more than momentary interest despite the inventive stunting of the designer and the earnest efforts of a cast of well-known actors.

"Apology" is the turgid tale of a ruthless business man whose God is money and it is told mostly by Elissa Landi, who lectures to the audience, converses with the actors now and then, sits around in the background while they act out of a scene here and there, and interprets what the characters are thinking or doing when they relapse into pantomime.

### The Life of Albert Warner

Miss Landi had the stage to herself for quite a while after the curtain went up. She addressed the audience on astronomical and anthropological subjects, with lantern slides, and seemed well launched on H. G. Wells' "Outline of History" when she suddenly switched from planetary phenomena and the Ape Man to Albert Warner and his singularly uninteresting career.

Theodore Newton, who played Albert, man and boy, thereupon took off his coat and pitched into what proved to be a very long evening indeed. Son of a wealthy mill owner, Albert played children's games with Florrie (sprung from a distinctly lower class), and after attending Princeton and failing to go overseas in the last war, married the daughter of a big department store owner on the proviso that he get half the business, on a moment or two late in the performance when Clay Clement, who kept turning up in one part or another, managed to bring things to life for a while as an aging and defeated robber baron of the old school.

### The Lectures of Landi

But it soon settled down into the doldrums again. Every little while Miss Landi would come forward in her capacity as lecturer to inquire: "What is Truth?" and embark on a discussion of Emotion versus Reason, while Albert Warner sat at his desk with set jaw, trying to decide whether to go to North Africa with his friend the Colonel, or slay cravenly in Washington as a dollar-a-year man.

Some time later Miss Landi wandered out again to remark: "Most people believe in God . . ." and at one point we distinctly heard her embark on an historic parable beginning "Napoleon Bonaparte . . ."

Later still she strode purposefully to where the footlights would have been if there had been any footlights and declaimed: "The Great Persian Empire was crumbling . . ." so forcefully that she woke the gentleman across the aisle from a sleep that had lasted, with short interruptions, from Albert Warner's days at Princeton.

While Miss Landi was crumbling the Persian Empire we had time to reflect in our own philosophical fashion how strange it is that directors like Lee Strasberg will consider plays like "Apology" worth producing, and how sad it is that so many good actors seem doomed to appear in bad plays.

### Actors Adrift in a Sea of Words

Miss Landi delivers her interminable polemics clearly and with poise. Mr. Clement is invariably adroit in at least three parts. Erin

### 'APOLOGY'

Play by Charles Schnee; produced and staged by Lee Strasberg; setting and lighting designed by Samuel Leve; presented at the Mansfield Theatre, Monday, March 22, 1943.

#### The cast:

|                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| The Lecturer      | Elissa Landi       |
| Albert Warner     | Theodore Newton    |
| Florrie           | Thelma Schnee      |
| Paul Vannon       | Ben Smith          |
| Fortune Teller    | Harold J. Stone    |
| Fraulein          | Merle Maddern      |
| William McCready  | Ben Smith          |
| Betty             | Erin O'Brien-Moore |
| Mr. Warner        | Clay Clement       |
| Laura             | Thelma Schnee      |
| Bingham           | James Todd         |
| Janitor           | Harold J. Stone    |
| Mr. Downing       | Clay Clement       |
| Shoplifter        | Merle Maddern      |
| Manny             | Lewis Charles      |
| Lester Hallantine | James Todd         |
| Evelyn            | Peggy Allardice    |
| Weber             | Robert Simon       |
| E. B.             | Clay Clement       |

O'Brien-Moore reminds us what a warm, persuasive quality she is able to bring to a rapid role. Merle Maddern wanders through several character parts effectively, and Peggy Allardice does a nice bit as a pugy little girl.

As for Theodore Newton, not once did he persuade us that he was really a hard-hearted money grabber. Mr. Newton was a nice clean-cut fellow up against the most erratic role of the evening, and it was too much for him. As for Thelma Schnee, the author's sister, she seemed uncomfortably miscast in both her parts.

On entering the theatre, the audience was handed a little leaflet bedriving the names of the actors, but not the parts they were playing, plus a statement to the effect that "Because of the character of this production, regular programs will not be distributed until the end of the play."

We are still trying to figure out what possible harm could have been done by passing out programs at the usual time. The management seems to have been overly impressed with the significance of the occasion.

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM  
March 23, 1943

## Apology at Mansfield Is Really in Need of One

By BURTON RASCOE

**A**POLOGY, by Charles Schnee, unfolded like a tired century plant at the Mansfield last night and wilted without ever showing any semblance of life. It is (believe it or not) a lecture, with actual lantern slides and the attempted illusion of them, that might have been entitled "The Poor Little Rich Boy and How He Became a Heel."

When George Jessel, as a wild, hirsute and near-sighted refugee, Czechoslovakian professor, puts on an act something like Apology in Show Time it is brief and funny. Apology lasts two hours and a half under the ferule of Elissa Landi, who is simply dispiriting without being any more profound than Mr. Jessel.

The ineptitude of the play is all the more flagrant in that it is very pretentious. Some of the technique is borrowed from Our Town, with Miss Landi carrying a role similar to that of Frank Craven, the narrator and commentator in the Wilder play. The bare stage is bathed in a soft haze; the few necessary pieces of furniture slide in and out as the baby spot is turned from one side of the stage to the other, and you are supposed to see the episodes Miss Landi narrates pretty

much as they would appear on a stereopticon screen except that the figures are vocal and animated.

### An Unending Rigamarole

When the early curtain goes up Miss Landi, in a short-skirted red crepe dress, is standing close to the footlights at the center of the stage under the restrained glow of a spotlight. There is a black backdrop. The stage is bare except for a park bench at her right. Miss Landi addresses herself to the audience in an informally formal sort of way, like an ingratiating saleswoman in a fashionable dress shop discussing the ensemble madame should wear with a certain gown. She begins by saying that although a certain scientist had figured it out that the first man appeared in September 4220 years ago on the banks of the Euphrates it is now the generally accepted belief that the species went through several evolutions over a considerable period of time before man appeared (and lantern slides are shown to illustrate these evolutions); that all men, including atheists, believe in God in some form or another, and that people ask questions and want to know why and all that.

She danced new worlds away out with this rigamarole, and you begin to squirm in your seat and wonder when the hell the show is going to start. Then Miss Landi asks the principal characters to come out with their wings. She introduces them to the audience, and when they have retired she explains that the actors will play several parts and that the audience will also have to imagine them at various stages in their lives from childhood on.

The play proper is about Albert Warner, the son of a millionaire mill owner in a Massachusetts town named after his grandfather. In childhood he learns from the resentments shown toward him by poorer children that the Warners are different from

other people. What with this and that he concludes that the ideal of happiness is directly concerned with the possession of money. So he resolves to possess heaps of it, to amass it by his superior cleverness, and with ruthlessness in which maudlin sentiment has no part. Miss Landi explains that men once worshipped nature, then God and they now worship money.

### Descent of a Heel

Warner learns that the daughter of the richest department store owner in New York is in love with him, and when the girl's father, seeking her happiness, approaches him on the subject of marrying his daughter he exacts as a part of the bargain that one-half of the ownership of the store be transferred to him before the wedding. From there on his skunk's progress is rapid; he drives his former partner to suicide; he tricks his auditor out of an unmasking affidavit; he avoids fighting in the last war and this one, but, wrapping the flag around him, snafes fat government contracts in the present war for supplies while getting great publicity as an indispensable war worker on the civilian front. His wife can no longer stand him and asks for a divorce. He seeks solace with a girl he has fired at the store. When she goes away his old nurse comes to beg some money, and remains to comfort him as she did when he was lonely and sad as a child . . . Then Miss Landi, who has been commenting off and on all along, comes forward to say that everybody asks questions but few have the answers—or something like that. Curtain.

Peggy Allardice provides one effective bit as the child pathetically describing her father as he is not but as she would like him to be, and Clay Clement has one good exit speech. The others are good actors but their parts were lifeless.

# "Apology"

NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN  
March 23, 1943

## Elissa Landi Heads Cast Of Play About Hard- Boiled Business Man

By JOHN ANDERSON

IN his anxiety to tell us everything he could think of about a character named Albert Warner, the author of "Apology" at the Mansfield last night used a mixture of many things—radio and movie technique, hints of "Our Town," "Hotel Universe," "Strange Interlude," and "From Morn to Midnight," snatches of old German magic lantern scenery, and finally some words of his own. Unfortunately, the character named Albert Warner hardly seemed worth all the trouble Charles Schnee has taken to get him on the stage. I imagine it will take less to get him off.

Stripped of all its pretentious trimmings, "Apology" is simply the story of a hard-boiled business man, who marries a depart-

ment store man's daughter in order to get the store, ruins his old friends and associates, neglects his family, dodges the war because he thinks it's a mugg's game, and winds up finding a little girl who loves him for himself alone. He then sees his duty and decides to go to war.

### Clinical Search

For some reason Mr. Schnee has found this character interesting enough to warrant two hours and a half of clinical soul-searching, but somehow he is unable to transmit his interest to the audience.

Heaven knows Mr. Schnee tries hard enough. First of all, he gives us no regular playbill, but presents us with a lecturer in the person of Elissa Landi. Miss Landi then shows us some foggy pictures on a screen. There is one of the Earth as viewed from the moon; another of the Brazilian three-toed sloth, a third of just a baby—all going to prove that man is an infinitesimal part of a universe he cannot even comprehend.

After this little lesson is allowed to sink in, Miss Landi introduces us to the players, and very soon the players, they are too—Theodore Newton, Thelma Schnee, the author's sister; Ben Smith, Erin O'Brien-Moore, Merle Madern, James Todd and Clay Clement. Some of them play several parts.

By this time Miss Landi is really on the beam, and Mr. Schnee has got down what appears to be a handy volume on quaint facts and fables of all times. From there out he gives Miss Landi all sorts of little anecd-

otes about lovelorn ladies when knighthood was in flower, about ancient Persian poets and Napoleon Bonaparte, as a sort of intellectual smorgasbord to be nibbled while carving up the aforementioned Albert Warner. Some of it sounded a little like George Jesse on one of his literary quotation sprees.

For all such hankey-pankey, however, I doubt if Mr. Schnee got at any facts about Albert Warner that a reasonably skilful playwright couldn't have disclosed by more conventional methods. And when such devices are used without special reason or real imagination, but merely for novelty, then we might as well have the cast recite the lines while hanging from the chandelier, or, for all I care, while riding on a roller coaster, preferably moving off rapidly into the distance.

From a couple of short scenes which had life in them it appeared that Mr. Schnee is able to write effectively when he writes simply, so it is a double pity that he got himself all cluttered up with dubious tricks. In these two duologues Mr. Newton, admirably aided first by Mr. Smith and then by Mr. Clement, managed to project directly the character of a spoiled, unprincipled and somewhat empty big shot, eating his little heart out for something he couldn't quite understand.

Since Lee Strasberg not only directed, but produced the play, it has its obvious appeal as a director's holiday, a lonely frolic. I should think, which didn't seem to include the playgoers.

NEW YORK SUN  
March 23, 1943

## 'Apology,' with Elissa Landi, Has Its Premiere at Mansfield Theater

By WARD MOREHOUSE

APOLOGY, a play in two parts, was enacted last evening within the protesting walls of the Mansfield Theater. It was played upon the stage on which the Angel Gabriel and the winged children of the celestial fish fry once frolicked and De Laud walked the treadmills with thundering solemnity.

The treadmills were in order again last night, but the drama wasn't. The new Mansfield exhibit, done without scenery—with scant props and pieces of furniture—a desk

here, a chair or table there—is a ponderous play, and one containing many interminable scenes. It is of the Thornton Wilder school, but the Wilder writing skill is absent.

The Lecturer is the principal character in "Apology." As was the Stage Manager in "Our Town," the Lecturer is the narrator, the commentator, the interlocutor. She is on the stage and off, in the play and out of it—in the wings, against the proscenium, perched on a ledge of a bench. It's a role played with poise and sureness by the platform-wise Elissa Landi.

"Apology," in brief, is the story of a man. The story of Albert Warner, of his life, and his apology for it. Albert Warner of Warner, Mass., and his father owned the big woolen mills. After the lecturer has told you, in her neat and precise diction, of the world's beginnings, of measureless distances, of space, of the unnumbered years of time, and has told you, too, that Albert, born just before 1900, is a man searching for the reason of his existence, you meet Albert in the flesh—and in the person of Theodore Newton.

All right, "Apology" and Elissa Landi then take you from the century's start to the warring world of 1943, covering Albert's boyhood and his college years, his loves and his marriage (for profit), his success in business, his unethical deals, his loss of his wife's love,

his friendlessness and disillusionment and, finally, his decision to be off to the wars in Africa.

Charles Schnee, new to Broadway's play-writing ranks, is the author of this two-part drama. Lee Strasberg has produced and staged it. There are excellent lighting effects by Samuel Leve. And there are several sharp performances by a cast that includes players you know.

Elissa Landi, never one of the lucky girls with her Broadway scripts, has grace, freshness and fluency. Her experience as a lecturer is readily apparent. I did not feel that Theodore Newton was any too happy with the role of the tortured Albert. Erin O'Brien-Moore, who has shown us some superior performances—"Street Scene" seems only just the other day—hasn't been given much to do in the role of Betty. Thelma Schnee, to be remembered as the raffish cockney girl in "The Corn Is Green," plays Florrie, I particularly liked the characterizations of James Todd, Clay Clement and Lewis Charles.

Before the evening is done at the Mansfield you are pretty well acquainted with Albert Warner, man and boy. Mr. Schnee and Mr. Strasberg and certainly Miss Landi have been very earnest about it all. But I don't think that "Apology" can get by—not even by the skin of its teeth.

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE  
March 23, 1943

## Apology Needed

By HOWARD BARNES

ONE of the characters in "Apology" is The Lecturer, whose hapless task it is to deliver a running commentary on the action. The author of the new Mansfield show seems to have been afraid that an audience might miss the deeper implications of his work. He might have saved on a player. For this drama by Charles Schnee is a dull and obvious fantasy, with about as much depth as a guppy bowl. Elissa Landi strides around the stage, pointing at lantern slides, delivering philosophical asides

and chatting with various principals, but there is nothing of any consequence for her to explain, unless it is why, in the name of good theater, "Apology" ever reached the boards.

A bad play inevitably sinks under its own defects, but the disaster is more embarrassing when it occurs pretentiously. "Apology" is pretentious from start to finish. Schnee has attempted to celebrate the career of an American tycoon in the impressionistic treatment which made "Our Town" for example, so effective. He has his man and he touches on various aspects of the fellow's peculiar pursuit of happiness. The trouble is that there has rarely been a duller figure paraded on the stage and that his activities are the sort to make one shudder for humanity rather than granting it a bit of tolerance.

Against a series of unadorned back drops, the play purports to show you what happens to a self-seeking man, until he finally sees the light for God, as Miss Landi has it, by meeting a luscious salesgirl and deciding to join the Army. There are episodes from his

youth. There is a particularly awful scene in which he makes a deal with his future father-in-law. The subject of this dismal dramatic portrait becomes successful, of course, but he is even less interesting as a full-fledged rat than he is as a little rat.

It is no fault of Theodore Newton that he has quite failed to project the central character of the offering. Even with Miss Landi's asides to the audience, he can never get more than a toe hold on a phony dramatic figure. Erin O'Brien-Moore and Thelma Schnee are rather more successful in breathing a few whiffs of vitality into the production, and Ben Smith has a good scene in which he gets his wrong-thinking pal to think right and get in a uniform. Players are given short shrift with the random parables and dreary philosophizing which constitute the bulk of "Apology." Lee Strasberg's staging is higgledy-piggledy, and even Sam Leve's restrained lighting effects seem pretentious. Here is not just a bad play, but one in which all the worst aspects are thrown into high relief.

# "Apology"

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS  
March 23, 1943

## 'Apology,' Novelty Drama, Reviews Life Of a Mistaken Man

'Apology,' drama in two parts by Charles Schnee. Produced by Lee Strasberg at the Mansfield Theatre, New York, March 22, 1942.

★ ★ +

By BURNS MANTLE

THE truth may make men free, but there is no guarantee of satisfaction in the processes of implanting the lesson. The drama "Apology," by Charles Schnee, produced at the Mansfield Theatre by Lee Strasberg last night, is an illustration of that particular conclusion.

NEW YORK TIMES  
March 23, 1943

## Elissa Landi and Others in a Study of Loneliness Called 'Apology,' Which Opened Last Evening at the Mansfield

By LEWIS NICHOLS

IN his first Broadway play, Charles Schnee has tried to offer something a little out of the ordinary, and because such a tonic always is helpful in combating the Spring fevers in the tired Forties, it is hard to disagree with the result. But last evening, as Lee Strasberg brought "Apology" to the Mansfield Theatre, it appeared that the preponderance of evidence was against

This is the recital of a man's life. It could have as reasonably been called "The Fall and Rise of Albert Warner." Or even "Albert in Search of His Soul." The story is told in short scenes shown in silhouettes and explained by a lady lecturer, who serves as both guide and commentator.

This lecturer is Elissa Landi, an intelligent and expressively spoken actress who has herself had considerable experience inquiring of the women's clubs if there are any questions they would like to ask about the dramas. Miss Landi introduces her subject, which is that of man's eternal search for answers to the mysteries of life, and follows the introduction with the presentations of those characters she plans to use for illustrative purposes.

### Interesting Scenes

Frequently there are stereopticon reproductions of suggested backgrounds on a black screen. More frequently benches, desks, settees and such are pushed quietly onto the stage to serve as props in the recital.

Thus we learn, bit by bit, that Albert Warner was a befuddled son of rich parents, who started his career playing king and queens with Lorraine, his lover, however, the tracks in the town where his father was a local capitalist.

As Albert grew older he was faced with a succession of common problems and managed, by keeping his mind on them, to make an

astounding number of wrong decisions.

He married the wrong girl; lived a wholly selfish life; beat down and ruined his competition; refused to meet his citizen obligations in wartime and out, and finally wound up ready to be divorced, but temporarily content, because he had decided to devote what was left him of life to helping with the task of making the world better for the sake of his daughter's future.

The scenes are generally well acted by Theodore Newton, who plays Albert; Erin O'Brien-Moore, who is the wife; Thelma Schnee, the loyal castoff; Ben Smith, his best friend; Clay Clement, his father; Merle Madern, his nurse; Peggy Allardice, his daughter; James Todd, his assistant; Harold Stone, Lewis Charles and Robert Simon.

Several of the episodes are attractively earnest in their writing and impressive in their playing. Some are dull and unimpaired. Grouped, they add up to one of those evenings that holds interest until the novelty of the form wears thin.

Thereafter "Apology" depends, as so many new plays do, on what the spectator takes to the theatre with him in the way of interest in the subject under discussion. It is, for example, more coherent than a miniature "Skin of Our Teeth," but much less amusing.

Last night's audience seemed pretty steadily interested, and there was a good deal of applause at the play's end.

him, although it also appeared that one day he will write a play to reverse the verdict. For a number of moments of "Apology" are interesting, and some are moving; as an entire evening in the theatre, however, the play is inclined to scatter itself too broadly.

The chances are that the difficulty lies primarily in the method of approach. As in the case of Thornton Wilder's "Our Town," Mr. Schnee uses a commentator to set forth his scenes and to describe what his characters are doing and sometimes what they are thinking. The result often is that just as the audience begins to grow interested in the people on the stage, the action comes to a halt for a further announcement and the cast thereafter must start over again. In addition, Mr. Schnee is no Booth Tarkington in expressing the thoughts of children, and some of the dialogue offered from that point is not much better, in describing a middle-aged loneliness.

The chief character of "Apology" is a figure, not unlike George, the magnificent Amerson. Born to wealth, he marries wealth, cold-bloodedly grabbing everything he wishes and finally becoming a present-day robber baron, but in the process growing solitary and alone.

In the complicated formula of Mr. Schnee, his case is offered in the form of a lecture by the commentator, the preamble to which consists of a series of lantern slides which are silly and have nothing to do with the evening. The scenery is midway between the bareness of "Our Town" and the usual stage setting—a few chairs, a table and sofa which slide on and off and sometimes also take attention away from the action.

While programs are not distributed until the play is over and an audience receives only a list of players on its arrival, it probably breaks no confidence to say that Theodore Newton has the leading role and Elissa Landi is the commentator. With long descriptive speeches, Miss Landi has a mountainous task which probably no one could fully accomplish; and Mr. Newton is bothered by the early passages of the play, where he is supposed to be a child and a youth. Erin O'Brien-Moore is attractive in one of the leading roles, and Thelma Schnee is wistfully adorable in the part her brother played down for her. Clay Clement has a good bit for his is a well-drawn character, and Peggy Allardice has several scenes as the unhappy daughter who wishes only that her father will pay some attention to her. Mr. Strasberg directed.

N. Y. NEWSPAPER PM  
March 23, 1943

## Short Scenes, But A Long Evening

By LOUIS KRONENBERGER

IN "Apology," Mr. Schnee has tried things the hard way and has been rather badly floored. He has told the story of a man's life in a long series of short spotlighted scenes, with much running commentary by Miss Elissa Landi, and with a certain attempt to link up the personal with the universal. Technically, he has combined almost the oldest of dramatic methods (that of the morality play) with almost the newest (that of Thornton Wilder's "Our Town")—a

union that in itself creates no conflict, since both methods are essentially allegorical. If his hero is in no sense Everyman, but rather a very particular kind of heel, he yet goes through some very typical experiences and comes to learn some very universal lessons.

The hero, Albert Warner, is a rich man's son who, in his search for power, tramples people down and betrays them and leaves them in the lurch. He finds out at length that he has outsmarted himself—that he is lonely and unhappy and that selfishness does not pay. That badly put, such a story cannot but seem hopelessly didactic; and it is the misfortune of "Apology" that it is that badly put. For all his dramaturgical fancy-work, Mr. Schnee has nowhere lifted his piece out of the realm of platitude. Nor has he very often raised it to the level of adequate theater. Some of his short scenes are pitifully effective, and there is everywhere an intention that deserves respect. But there is nowhere any real dramatic force or true moral impact. In scene after scene Mr. Schnee tries for simplicity and achieves only flatness, even a touch of foolishness. Life means something to him, but he is not yet able to say, in soundly personal terms what it means. He

is all too "literary" without knowing really how to write. The tone of much of his play seems forced, and the effect of almost all of it seems banal.

So far as using a commentator goes, it does not matter that he has borrowed the device; it only matters that he has not mastered it. Miss Landi's lines are for the most part both arch and prosy; they do not explain, they merely embroider; and they further slow up a play that in itself lacks pace and proportion.

Miss Landi is pretty much hamstrung by her lines, but is perhaps not ideal for the part—her beautifully cultivated voice harms as much as it helps, by seeming a little elocutionary. Erin O'Brien-Moore does not seem too happily cast either. Theodore Newton brings a certain force to the part of the hero; and in a double role Thelma Schnee comes off very well indeed. In a triple role Clay Clement does well, too. Peggy Allardice is good in a small part, and the others in the cast do what they can. Mr. Strasberg seems to have done what he could in directing the play, but it all seems slow and protracted.